

Death March. I quiz journalists returning from wars in Bosnia, the Sudan, the Congo, Angola, Indonesia, Guatemala, San Salvador, Chile, Northern Ireland, Algeria. As I lay sleepless, I realized I'd done all this research to better understand my country. I now revere words like democracy, freedom, the right to vote, and the grandeur of the extraordinary vision of the founding fathers. Do I see America's flaws? Of course. But I now can honor her basic, incorruptible virtues, the ones that let me walk the streets screaming my ass off that my country had no idea what it was doing in South Vietnam. My country let me scream to my heart's content—the same country that produced both Al Krobeth and me.

Now, at this moment in New Jersey, I come to a conclusion about my actions as a young man when Vietnam was a dirty word to me. I wish I'd led a platoon of marines in Vietnam. I would like to think I would have trained my troops well and that the Viet Cong would have had their hands full if they entered a firefight with us. From the day of my birth, I was programmed to enter the Marine Corps. I was the son of a marine fighter pilot, and I had grown up on marine bases where I had watched the men of the corps perform simulated war games in the forests of my childhood. That a novelist and poet bloomed darkly in the house of Santini strikes me as a remarkable irony. My mother and father had raised me to be an Al Krobeth, and during the Vietnam era they watched in horror as I metamorphosed into another breed of fanatic entirely. I understand now that I should have protested the war after my return from Vietnam, after I had done my duty for my country. I have come to a conclusion about my country that I knew then in my bones but lacked the courage to act on: America is good enough to die for even when she is wrong.

I looked for some conclusion, a summation of this trip to my teammate's house. I wanted to come to the single right thing, a true thing that I may not like but that I could live with. After hearing Al Krobeth's story of his walk across Vietnam and his brutal imprisonment in the North, I found myself passing harrowing, remorseless judgment on myself. I had not turned out to be the man I had once envisioned myself to be. I thought I would be the kind of man that America could point to and say, "There. That's the guy. That's the one who got it right. The whole package. The one I can depend on." It had never once occurred to me that I would find myself in the position I did on that night in Al Krobeth's house in Roselle, New Jersey: an American coward spending the night with an American hero.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COMMANDER CLAYTON O. MITCHELL, JR., CIVIL ENGINEER CORPS, UNITED STATES NAVY

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to recognize and bid farewell to an outstanding naval officer, Lieutenant Commander Clayton O. Mitchell, Jr., upon his departure from my staff. Lieutenant Commander Mitchell has truly epitomized the "Can Do" spirit of the Seabees and Navy core values of honor, courage, and commitment during his assignment as a Navy Legislative Fellow on my staff. He has been a valued team member who has had an enduring impact upon the State of Mississippi. He will be sorely missed.

Lieutenant Commander Mitchell reported to my staff from Naval Mobile

Construction Battalion Seventy Four, a Seabee battalion homeported in my home State of Mississippi. As operations officer for the "Fearless" Seabees of NMCB 74, he directed the military and construction operations for the unit at 11 deployment sites throughout the Atlantic coast, Caribbean, and Central America in addition to leading disaster recovery efforts in the aftermath of hurricane Georges. He spearheaded recovery operations which helped clear roads and restore vital services at Construction Battalion Center Gulfport and the Mississippi Gulf Coast within 24 hours.

Lieutenant Commander Mitchell is a 1985 industrial engineering graduate of California Polytechnic State University (Cal-Poly), San Luis Obispo. He was commissioned as an Ensign through the Officer Candidate School at Newport, Rhode Island after working two years as an engineer for Rockwell International. He began his career as a Navy Civil Engineer Corps officer with Chesapeake Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command as the Assistant Resident Officer in Charge of Construction, Andrews AFB, Maryland. He then reported to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Forty for two nine month deployments which included Assistant Officer in Charge, Detail Sigonella, Sicily and Officer in Charge, Detail Diego Garcia, British Indian Ocean Territories.

After his first Seabee tour with NMCB Forty, Lieutenant Commander Mitchell then attended the University of California at Berkeley, earning a Master of Science degree in civil engineering. He followed Berkeley with an assignment to the United States Naval Academy as Shops Engineer in the Public Works Department, directing a 270 member workforce responsible for the Academy's facilities maintenance, transportation, and utilities operations.

His next challenge was as Facilities Planning Officer, Public Works Center, Yokosuka, Japan. In this capacity, he directed a host nation construction program with over \$1.7 billion in projects under design and/or construction. He spearheaded execution of some of the Navy's most critical projects in Japan, including the delivery of 854 family housing units with the completion of the \$1 billion Ikego family housing complex and a \$41 million carrier pier at Yokosuka. For nine months during this tour, Lieutenant Commander Mitchell also served as Staff Civil Engineer to the Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Japan, where he was the Navy's "go to" man for facilities and civil engineering issues.

Lieutenant Commander Mitchell has also made a significant impact in the various communities in which he has served. He directed a Mids'N'Kids tutorial/mentorship program, providing Annapolis youth with a midshipman sponsor and access to Naval Academy facilities on a weekly basis during the school year. As treasurer for the Sam-

uel P. Massie Educational Endowment, he distributed over \$35,000 in scholarship awards to Maryland college and university students. In 1995, he was recognized as the "Volunteer of the Week for Father's Day" by the Annapolis Capitol newspaper for his contributions in the community. In 1997, he was recognized by Black Engineer magazine with an "Engineer of the Year: Special Recognition Award" as one of the nation's promising young engineers of the future.

On my staff, he has established himself as a consummate professional providing guidance and oversight on a plethora of Department of Defense issues ranging from Defense health care, military construction, shipbuilding, and various weapons systems programs. His efforts also yielded over \$100 million in research, development, test, and evaluation funds for Mississippi Universities.

Lieutenant Commander Mitchell is married to the former Karen Elaine Blackwell of Washington, D.C. and their family includes daughter, Kendra and son, Austin. He is a registered professional engineer in the Commonwealth of Virginia and a Seabee Combat Warfare qualified officer who enthusiastically returns to his Navy. I have appreciated greatly Lieutenant Commander Mitchell's contributions to my team and wish him fair winds and following seas in the future.

TRIBUTE TO STEPHEN C. NUNEZ, NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION (NASA)

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to recognize and say farewell to an outstanding NASA Manager, Stephen C. Nunez, upon his departure from my staff. Mr. Nunez was selected as a NASA Congressional Fellow to work in my office because of his knowledge of the aerospace industry, NASA programs, and NASA's John C. Stennis Space Center in my home state of Mississippi. It is a privilege for me to recognize the many outstanding achievements he has provided for the United States Senate, NASA, and our great Nation.

During his NASA fellowship, Mr. Nunez worked on legislation affecting NASA, the aerospace industry, and veterans. He worked hard to ensure the NASA Authorization Bill and the VA-HUD and Independent Agencies Appropriation Bill for fiscal year 2001 included legislative provisions that will lead to the next generation of reusable launch vehicles. These initiatives will reduce the cost of getting payloads into orbit by a factor of 10. These provisions also support specific programs aimed at fostering the development of a robust U.S. propulsion industry, which includes rocket engine testing at the Stennis Space Center. Specifically, he helped ensure that NASA's Space Launch Initiative was fully funded in fiscal year 2001 at \$290 million.

Mr. Nunez also worked to ensure that legislative provisions were included in